

Clear Lake State Park



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



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Clear Lake State Park

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Clear Lake State Park is located on the southwestern shore of California's largest natural lake. The park attracts more than 120,000 annual visitors whose favorite activities include swimming, fishing, boating, waterskiing, picnicking, and, of course, camping. Since camping is so popular, reservations are recommended for summer visits.

The Clear Lake region is geologically active, as evidenced by the many hot springs in the area. At the turn of the century, hundreds of health-seekers were drawn to the local resorts, which promised to cure anything from rheumatism to obesity. The park is located on Soda Bay, which was named for a spring of carbonated water that rises from the bottom of the lake, making the surface of the water look as if it were boiling.

The most prominent of the region's many volcanic cones is 4200-foot Mount Konocti, just south and west of the park. It is classified as an active volcano, though it has been quiet for thousands of years—a short time by geologic standards.

WEATHER

The park and surrounding area are at their best in the spring and fall, when wildflowers and animal life abound. In fall the changing colors of the trees make a dramatic and colorful display.

Summer temperatures often reach over 100 degrees, though the nights are usually pleasantly cool. In winter there is seldom snow in the park, but the nearby mountains are often covered for short periods. Low temperatures





Swim Beach

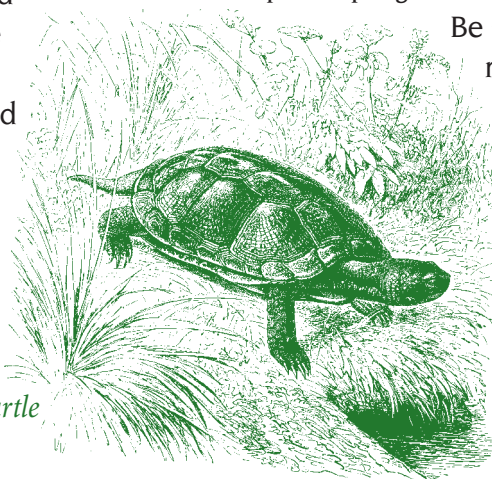
may go down to 20 degrees, and rain is fairly common between October and March.

THE PARK

Established in the 1940s with a gift of 300 acres from Fred and Nellie Dorn, Clear Lake State Park is a refuge and nesting place for many varieties of waterfowl. Wood ducks nest in its trees, and mallards find homes in the grass and tules. Coots, gulls, valley quail and woodpeckers are numerous. Other birds found in the area include grebes, blue herons, egrets, white pelicans, horned owls, wrens, bush tits, northern flickers, red-shouldered hawks and osprey.

Visitors who use the park's hiking and interpretive trails are often able to see some of this area's native wildlife, including black-tailed deer, black-tailed hares, brush rabbits, beehey ground squirrels, gray squirrels, chipmunks, gray foxes, skunks, minks, muskrats, western pond turtles and raccoons, plus an occasional bobcat or mountain lion.

Pond turtle



In late winter and early spring the bright magenta flowers of western redbud lend a colorful highlight to the landscape. At about the same time, California buckeye trees leaf out and prepare to blossom. Manzanita, mountain mahogany and basket bush are common shrubs, and the toyon, with its red berries in the winter season, is well represented. Foothill pines, blue oaks, valley oaks and California bay-laurel are prominent in the woodlands, while black cottonwood, box elder, California black walnut and willows are found near the streams.

Visitor Center

A visitor center, located west of the boat launch parking lot, features outstanding interpretive displays that focus on the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the lake. Included in the center is a large aquarium displaying some of the lake's fish species.

Activities

Morning nature walks, evening campfire programs, and the Junior Ranger Program are scheduled throughout the summer season. Check park bulletin boards for further information and precise schedules.

Special programs are available for groups.

Be sure to make arrangements at least two weeks before your visit.

Camping

The park has four developed campgrounds with a total of 147 sites, plus two sites set aside in the Cole

Creek Campground for campers who arrive on foot or bicycle. Each site has a table with a food locker and fire ring.

Drinking water spigots are located throughout all four campgrounds, and all but Lower Bayview have restrooms with hot showers. There is a RV sanitation station near the boat launch area, but none of the campsites have RV hookups.

Cole Creek Campground, located in the shade of tall valley oaks and cottonwoods next to a lovely open meadow, is especially popular during the hot summer months. The individual campsites are flat, suitable for tents, trailers or motor homes up to 21 feet long.

Kelsey Creek Campground has several sites right on the shoreline, and all of its 65 sites are within easy walking distance of beautiful lake view. Each site will accommodate a tent or RV up to 34 feet long. Campers with lakeside sites may pull their boats onto the adjacent beach. However, boats may not be moored overnight in the Kelsey Slough.

Lower Bayview Campground, located in a shady grove of oaks and buckeyes, offers some good views of the lake and is close to the swimming beach. Each of the 21 sites has a flat area for a tent, but the parking spaces are not recommended for campers and trailers.



Upper Bayview Campground is popular for “getting away from it all.” A few of the 35 sites have excellent vistas; others are situated under shady oaks. Several of the sites can accommodate trailers or motor homes up to 21 feet long, and there are many large tent sites. Shower facilities for Upper and Lower Bayview are located at the entrance to the Upper Bayview Campground.

Picnicking

You can fish for crappie, catfish, or largemouth bass while enjoying your picnic lunch under the oaks and cottonwoods in the picnic area along the bank of Cole Creek. Sites have tables and barbecues. Water faucets, restrooms and parking areas that can accommodate a few buses are nearby.

Group Picnicking

Groups of up to 200 persons can reserve this facility by contacting the park directly. The group site includes two large barbecues, water, electricity and night lighting on request.

Group Camping

The group camp accommodates 50 people. It is a level grassy area on the bank of Cole Creek and has an adjacent paved parking area that is suitable for self-contained RVs. Amenities include picnic tables, barbecue stoves and campfire rings.



Dorn Nature Trail

Boat Launch

The boat launch facility and marina are located on the west bank of Cole Creek. The launch ramp is paved and lighted and usable year-round. Boat mooring slips are also available. Ample paved parking is adjacent to the marina, and there are electrical pedestals for charging electric boat motor batteries.

Swimming

Clear Lake State Park has a swimming beach that is located just below the Lower Bayview Campground.

Hiking

There are several miles of hiking trails and fire roads within the park. Most of the terrain is hilly, with elevations of 1320 to 1600 feet. You'll probably see deer and other smaller animals such as squirrels, and many kinds of birds.

Dorn Nature Trail winds through oak woodland and chaparral. You will see a variety of vegetation, including oaks, manzanita, and a wide variety of native wildflowers. You can start the trail at several points (see map). The two-mile trail is moderately strenuous, but there are some nice vistas and a pleasing variety of natural environments to enjoy. Drinking water is not available on the trail.

Indian Nature Trail is a self-guided trail that will help you understand how the local Indians used the native plants and other sources of this

area to meet their daily needs. The trail is a moderate half-mile walk that begins near the park entrance and provides a great view of the entrance meadow.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Dogs may come camping with you but must be on a leash and kept in your tent or camper at night. They are not allowed on trails.
- Fires are permitted only in the stoves or fireplaces provided. Ground fires are not allowed. Down wood is part of the forest scene and may not be gathered for campfires. Bring your own fuel or buy it at the entrance station.
- Loaded firearms and fireworks are not allowed in the park. Quiet hours are 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Please don't run your generator between 8 p.m. and 10 a.m.
- Speed limit on park roads is 15 mph. Bicyclists should be careful as the roads are narrow. State law requires riders under 18 to wear a helmet.
- Mosquito repellent will make your visit more comfortable.
- Diving is not permitted anywhere in state parks.
- Poison oak is found throughout the park, and chances are you won't enjoy the results of your encounter if you wander from designated trails and camp/picnic areas. If you or your children don't know what it looks like, ask a ranger to identify it for you.



Poison oak

CLEAR LAKE

